



CHAPTER 16

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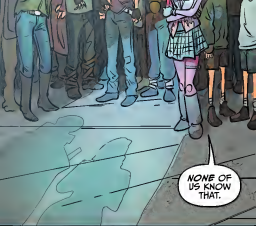




EARTH
DENTS. MY
NAME IS HEATHER.
AS MANY OF YOU
KNOW I AM SECOND
HAND TO GRACE HALL,
THE LEADER OF THE
GREAT NATION OF
CONCORD.









...AH.
WELL...

...I AM
HERE TELL YOU
THAT YOU ARE ALL
PART OF A SELECT
GROUP OF DENTS
WHO HAVE BEEN
CHOSEN TO HELP
REBUILD THE GREAT
NATION OF
CONCORD.



AHEM...WE OFFER
YOU PROTECTION.
YOU WILL NO LONGER
HAVE TO LIVE IN FEAR
OF EXECUTION.

This panel shows a character with long, dark, wavy hair from the back, looking at a document held by an unseen person. The document is filled with several lines of illegible, wavy text. The background is a plain, light blue color.



UNDER OUR TRAINING YOU
WILL LEARN TO USE YOUR
DANGEROUS AND UNNATURAL
SICKNESS FOR THE
GOOD OF THIS
WORLD.

This panel shows a character with long, dark, wavy hair from the back, speaking to a crowd of people. The crowd is visible in the foreground, and the background shows a city street with buildings and a cloudy sky.





...EXCUSE
ME?



LOOK
AT US WHILE
YOU CALL US
UNNATURAL.



A comic book panel set in a dark, industrial environment with blue light streaks in the background. Batman, in his iconic suit and cowl, is shown from the chest up, facing Selina Kyle. Selina has long, dark, wavy hair and wears glasses. She has a concerned expression. In the bottom left corner, the heads of three other people are visible, looking on. Two speech bubbles are present: one from Batman and one from Selina.

SHUT
YOUR MOUTH,
DENT!

NO, NO!
IT'S FINE.
I JUST...I'VE
LOST MY
PLACE.



THE
ORDER OF
THIS NATION IS
AT RISK.

COMMUNES
AND DESERTERS
PLAGUE OUR LAND
AND DEPRIVE US ALL OF
THE LITTLE RESOURCES
WE HAVE LEFT. THEY
THREATEN THE GREAT
PROGRESS WE'VE
MADE TOWARDS
A STABLE...



THE
COMMUNES
YOU'VE BEEN
DESTROYING ARE
ALL SELF SUSTAINABLE.
DO YOU HAVE ANY CLUE
WHAT WE'VE MANAGED
TO BUILD OUT THERE
FOR OURSELVES?! THE
FAMILIES WE'VE
MADE?





YOU HAVE
BEEN CHOSEN TO
USE YOUR SICKNESS TO
FURTHER THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THIS NATION AND DEFEAT
ALL THOSE WHO BETRAY
THE LAWS SET BY OUR
GENEROUS LEADER.

YOU WILL
ABIDE BY A STRICT
CODE OF CONDUCT.

OVER THE COURSE
OF YOUR TRAINING
YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO
CONCORD WILL BE
RIGOROUSLY
TESTED.



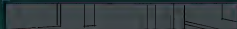


THOSE
WHO FAIL TO
CONVINCE US OF
THEIR DEVOTION
WILL BE SUBJECT
TO THE STANDARD
CODES OF THE
MENDING.



YOU MEAN
YOU'LL KILL
US...IF WE DON'T
AGREE TO KILL
OUR OWN?



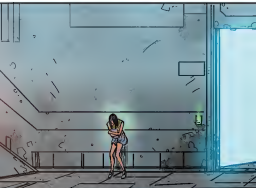


I...I WILL
RETURN MID-DAY
TOMORROW. YOUR
TRAINING BEGINS
THEN. TRY TO...
REST UP.









W

HILE MY SISTER AND MARI WOKE UP TO THEIR NIGHTMARES AT THE MINISTRY, WE STRUGGLED TO FIND A SINGLE WARM WELCOME IN THE TAHOE COMMUNE.

WE
DON'T GET
MUCH OF
YOUR KIND
UP HERE.



WE COME IN
PEACE. WE ONLY
WISH TO TRADE
FOR A NEW FUEL
CELL FOR OUR
VEHICLE.





I'M
SURE WE CAN
COME TO SOME
SORT OF AN
AGREEMENT.

YOU
WON'T HAVE
ENOUGH TO
TRADE FOR A FUEL
CELL. I HOPE
YOU REALIZE
THAT.





WE
HAVE A LARGE
SUPPLY OF
MINISTRY-GRADE
WEAPONS.

AND AN
AV-12. THAT
SHOULD BE
ENOUGH.



YOU...
YOU'RE NOT
ONE OF THEM
ARE YOU? DRAPED
IN GUNS. YOU
SOME SORT OF
SYMPATHIZER?

I'M WAS A
HUNTER FOR CITY
264. I DESERTED
FOURTEEN YEARS
AGO TO SAVE MY
NIECE. THESE DENTS
OFFERED ME A HOME.
I'VE NEVER
KNOWN BETTER
PEOPLE.





264?
ABOVE OLD SAN
FRANCISCO? WHAT
THE HELL ARE YOU
DOING ALL THE WAY
OUT HERE?



OUR NEARBY
TRADING POSTS
HAVE BEEN RAIDED
RECENTLY. YOU
WERE OUR ONLY
OPTION.

TWO
NETHER DENTS
WERE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE RAIDS. WE
THINK THEY'RE IN-
VOLVED WITH THE
MINISTRY SOME-
HOW.





CHLOB.



**NETHER
DENTS?! YOU
FREAKS ARE MIXED
UP WITH NETHERS
AND YOU HAD THE
AUDACITY TO COME
HERE?**



WE JUST
NEED THE FUEL
CELL AND WE'LL
BE ON OUR
WAY.



NO. IT'S FINE.
YOU'LL STAY THE
NIGHT AND HAVE
SOMETHING TO EAT.
ALL COMMUNES SHOULD
LOOK OUT FOR THOSE
IN NEED. YOU CAN FIND
A PLACE AT THE
CAMPFIRE.





THANK
YOU.







THEY'RE
NOT LEAVING
HERE WITH
THAT AV-23,
DAVID.

LET
THEM GO.
MILES. THEY'RE JUST
TRYING TO SURVIVE
LIKE THE REST OF
US. WE DON'T
NEED IT.

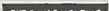
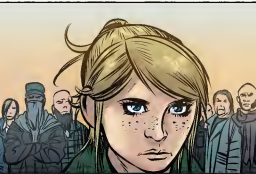




I DON'T WANT TO STAY THE

I DIDN'T WANT TO STAY THE NIGHT. I FELT THE LOOKS OF DISGUST AS WALKED BY ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNE.





BUT I WAS HOLDING
ONTO A SECRET.

I KNEW WE HAD
BEEN FOLLOWED.

BY A COWARD WHO WAS TOO
AFRAID TO SHOW HIS FACE,
BUT EVEN MORE AFRAID OF
LOSING ANY OF US.





*I FELT SAFER KNOWING HE
WAS CLOSE BY...WATCHING.*

